reasons for failure of the measures taken so far to check poaching of wildlife in the country;

(c) whether Government have considered the desirability of setting up a specialised investigating agency to deal with the wildlife-related crimes; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The estimated value of tiger, leopard and jungle cat skins seized during the last one year is approximately Rs. 17 lakhs. Cases of poaching have been detected both inside and outside the protected areas. However, instances of poaching are higher outside the protected areas due to inadequate enforcement infrastructure.

(b) Poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its product, because of high pecuniary gains, has organised itself in a powerful mafia. The enforcement machinery does not have adquate infrastructure to combat such organised mafias.

(c) and (d) A proposal is under consideration in this Ministry for setting up of a special mechanism for Wildlife Trade Prevention and Control to deal with poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

Unsatisfactory Waste Disposal Systems

1702. SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the waste disposal systems in use in different cities and towns of the country are not satisfactory and are responsible for environmental pollution;

(b) whether the Ministry would take necessary steps to enforce the use of waste disposal system, which would be eco-friendly and less hazardous; and

(c) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes sir. Most of the waste disposal systems in use in different cities and towns of the country are not satisfactory and are responsible for environmental pollution.

(b) and (c) Solid Waste Management is a State Subject. It is an obligatory function of the State Governments/Urban Local Bodies to plan, design, implement, operate and maintain solid waste management systems in the urban areas of the country. To streamline the management of solid wastes, the Government notified the draft Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1999 in The Gazette of India Extraordinary Part II-Section 3—Sub-section (ii) on September 27, 1999 inviting suggestions and objections. A large number of suggestions and objections have been received.

Environmental Pollution by Mining Operations

1703. SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mining operations in various parts of the country are responsible for environmental pollution as well as to flora and fauna; and

(b) if so, what remedial measures have been taken and are being contemplated for future by Government, to contain such harmful effects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The mining operations may cause environmental pollution as also may affect the flora and fauna, if environmental safeguards are not adopted.

(b) The Government has notified ambient air quality standards which are also applicable to mining activities. All mining projects of major minerals, with mining area of more than five hectares, are required to obtain environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Provision of Wireless sets to Forest Personnel in M.P.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.